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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

8/4/61

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General Taylor thought
that CIA might be interested in
this.



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NSC review(s) completed
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Notes on

Telephone Conversation between GENERAL MAXWELL D. TAYLOR in Washington, D.C., and MR. GERALD BARTELL, of McFadden Publications, in New York City, on Wednesday, 2 August 1961, 2:45 p.m.

- T: I got word this morning by courtesy of Mr. Nestingen that you had information on Venezuela that I would probably profit by having.
- B: Actually I was in Curacao, Netherlands West Indies, for a couple of days. Gagarin was there. I was able to wangle some words with him on an exclusive basis. He really didn't realize I was an American (we have a TV station down there), and I had about half an hour with him about which I told Nestingen.

Briefly, Gagarin indicated to me that he thought Shepard and Grissom did very well for the limited equipment they had. Gagarin thought he would be going to the moon, that there was a very good chance he would. When asked about the US going to the moon also, he said there was room on the moon for everybody.

()he thought there was nothing unfriendly in it. Merely quoting a speech by Khrushchev, indicating K's friendship for Cuba. Gagarin wanted to let me know that this was really a Cuban rather than an American question.

There was a feeling that Gagarin would like to come to the United States. He said invitations had not been given by US, but that he would like to see how Americans live. Then he indicated that this was, however, only an academic question as he had had no indication that he would be welcome in the United States; the State Department had not issued him a visa.

It was interesting that the Brazilian consul did not meet Gagarin in Curacao - he was left rather stranded because the Dutch consul had no official reception for him either; and the American Ambassador was busy elsewhere with a visiting admiral at the time. So I acted as if I were the reception committee! Gagarin seemed too tired to notice (his reception).

The conversation was through Gagarin's interpreter. I know that some of ~~his~~^{my} questions must have been fended off by the interpreter. I also gathered that Gagarin does not have a very high political IQ, but he seemed very responsive in quite a nice pleasant way.

I thought the outstanding point was that I was probably the first American newsman Gagarin has talked to. I am planning to go to Moscow and hope that, if the Russians find out I am a publisher, this won't affect my plans.

(EXECUTIVE REGISTRY FILE

White House

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T: When is Gagarin going to the moon?

B: He said he wants to stop travelling soon, because he has to get prepared for his next assignment, but didn't indicate what this was. He is now going - or was then going - to Brazil, and I think Canada was to be next. Then he is returning to the Soviet Union.

T: Do you think he should come to the United States?

B: Yes, I think we should ask him to come. Gagarin made a slighting remark about our own space efforts. He said it, however, so laboriously and precisely that it almost seemed as if he had been told just what to say, and that he did not recall later what he had read from the document. This was evident when on later questioning he at first denied having said something he had read.

On the subject of President Kennedy's speech about a week ago, Gagarin asked what talk I was referring to, which indicated he makes no attempt to keep abreast of the news.

At one point some unidentified character seemed to take exception to the number of questions I was asking Gagarin on United States-Soviet relationships. They thought I was an Islander (a TV man down there). I explained that Curacao people are very interested in what is going on between these two great powers. The unidentified person did not like the idea of talking about a possible conflict between the US and USSR.

T: When are you going to publish something on this?

B: A group of us here are right now discussing from all angles the best way of doing this.....in our monthly publications.

T: I would be very interested to see what you finally do.

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